



NEWS

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SBA's INAUGURAL PERKINS AWARD RECOGNIZES CONTRACT SUCCESS WITH WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS

WASHINGTON — The head of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Aida Alvarez, will present today the first-ever Frances Perkins Vanguard Awards to government and industry leaders who have excelled in providing contracts to women-owned small businesses. Federal contracting to women-owned firms topped \$4 billion last fiscal year, an increase of more than \$700 million over the previous year.

“As President Roosevelt’s Secretary of Labor from 1933 to 1945, Frances Perkins has the distinction of being the first woman ever to hold a Cabinet-level position,” said Administrator Alvarez. “She was a social reformer, with a deep commitment to women’s issues. She was a trendsetter.

“Today, we honor a new breed of trendsetter – those companies, federal agencies and individuals that give women-owned small businesses the chance to compete for and win federal contracts. Congratulations to each of our winners. You truly are in the vanguard. With the help of the SBA and people like our winners, we hope that women-owned small businesses will soon be hitting the \$10 billion-per-year mark.”

The SBA will present the award to two private-sector firms. To be eligible, the company had to be an SBA contracting *Award of Distinction* holder, with at least five percent of its subcontracts going to women-owned small businesses. The industry category winners are:

- **Bell Helicopter Textron** of Fort Worth, Texas. This company, which produces light and medium vertical take-off and landing aircraft, provided women-owned small businesses with nearly \$30 million in contracts for 1998, a more than 520 percent increase from the ‘92 level of \$4.8 million. Ms. Sandi Walker and Ms. Emily Shepperd will accept the award on behalf of the company. (Bell is also the recipient of a 1999 SBA Eisenhower Award for its overall small business contracting accomplishments.)
- **TRW Systems & Information Technology Group** of Fairfax, Va. This division is part of a global company that provides high technological and engineering services and products to space, electronics, defense and commercial markets. In 1999, the firm calculates that it is

providing about seven percent of its subcontracts to women-owned small businesses, up from the previous year's level of just under five percent. Mr. Al Bolden and Ms. Pat Bishop will be attending the ceremonies for TRW.

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In the category reserved for a federal agency, the winner is the **National Guard Bureau** of Tacoma, Wash. This office oversees all fiscal, logistical contracting and internal review activities of the Army and Air National Guard in Washington state. The office, under the direction of Colonel Curtis Pintler, increased in a one-year period its contracting with women-owned small companies over 1,000 percent, to 42 percent up from four percent. Col. Pinter will be accepting the award.

The remaining category is for a federal procurement official and the winner is **Anthony J. DeLuca**, director of the United States Air Force's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. In FY98, his department awarded over \$400 million in prime contracts to women-owned small businesses. Mr. DeLuca, who said his goal for women-owned small business contracting is a billion dollars by next year, will be present to accept the award.

The award presentations are part of the 32nd Annual Joint Industry/SBA Procurement Conference and Business Opportunity Expo. The three-day event in Washington, DC runs through Thursday, June 10. Most events will be held at either the Grand Hyatt Washington Hotel or the Washington, DC Convention Center. The exhibits on display at the convention center will be open to the public free of charge. Additional details on the event and the awards are available at <http://www.sba.gov/gc/expo.htm>.

The SBA also will unveil during the conference plans for an enhancement of *PRO-Net*, the agency's on-line database of small businesses that have expressed an interest in doing business with the government and others. The new element will be available to the public around July 1 and its primary function is as an Internet-based location where prime contractors can post subcontracting opportunities. Small businesses can use this system to more accurately target their selections and pinpoint subcontracts consistent with their capabilities.

The entire *PRO-Net* database is available at <http://pro-net.sba.gov>.

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